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# THE BAPTIST Record

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## Haiti teams focus on urgent & long-term needs

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) - A Southern Baptist assessment team left the United States early the week of Jan. 18, to connect with Haitian Baptist leaders and craft plans for disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of the 7.0 earthquake that struck the island Jan. 12.

The international community is rallying to meet urgent needs - from food, water and medical services to transportation and security, according to news reports. Search and rescue teams began combing the massive amount of rubble in the devastated capital, Port-au-Prince. Military teams from other countries began establishing communications, transport and security services - critical needs in a country where government offices and basic infrastructure were destroyed by the largest earthquake in 200 years.

The death toll among the city's 3 million inhabitants could top 100,000, Haiti's prime minister told reporters Jan. 13.

"Serious security concerns could emerge as people become more desperate for food and water in areas where police and military control has not been established," said Jim Brown, U.S. director for Baptist Global Response (BGR). The capital's main prison also collapsed in the earthquake, raising the prospect of criminals escaping into the city. As a result, near-term attempts to travel to the country would be ill-advised.

The five-member assessment team will evaluate ministry needs like rescue operations, medical services and shelter, as well as logistical concerns like transportation and security, Brown said. The team is composed of representatives from Baptist Global



AFTER THE QUAKE - Survivors in the streets of Port-au-Prince after the earthquake which struck Haiti Jan. 13 wander in shock after the disaster. Southern Baptists have mobilized in response to the need. (BP photo)

Response, North American Mission Board and disaster relief specialists from Kentucky, Mississippi and South Carolina.

A separate Florida Baptist disaster relief team is planning its own assessment trip and the two teams will collaborate in their reporting to the national Southern Baptist

disaster relief network. The teams also will report back on long-term strategies to help Haitians rebuild their lives.

"We have one Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force member who was scheduled to arrive in Haiti January 19 as a part of the BGR team," said Barri Shirley, Associate Executive Director, Business Services, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. "Everyone is anxious and willing to help, but we need to make sure there is security and safety for the volunteers. The immediate need is for medial personnel and feeding teams, but there will be long term opportunities for rebuild teams. Those interested should pray and prepare, securing passports and determining the type of inoculations they might need. We are coordinating through the U.S State Department."

"There are two Baptist conventions in Haiti and the Florida Baptist Convention has historically partnered with one convention while the International Mission Board has partnered with the other," Brown said. "We will combine our findings to draft the overall strategy."

"Apart from donating to the disaster relief fund, concerned individuals can help greatly by joining in focused prayer for Haiti's 9 million people, more than 80 percent of whom live below the poverty line," said David Brown, who with his wife, Jo, directs Baptist Global Response work in the Americas.

"We want to encourage Christians to focus their prayers on several points," David Brown said. "Please pray for those who have been affected by the quake - people who are trapped in rubble or homeless, those who are hungry or injured or traumatized."

## How You Can help in Haiti - Right Away

Officials are concerned that an unprecedented disaster situation following the earthquake in Haiti is developing. Fears are that as many as 200,000 people may be dead and 3 million people homeless. The response from America will last weeks.

### Here's what we know...

- 900 Southern Baptist Churches in Haiti
- 70 of these churches are in Port au Prince
- Baptist Global Response (BGR) is the coordinating agency for Southern Baptist international disaster relief. Florida Baptist Convention has a partnership with Haiti and owns a ministry compound on the island.
- Mississippi and Kentucky are the lead states for international response for the month of January. Teams are on standby from these states to travel as soon as assessed needs can be known.



### Here's what you can do

1. Pray - for the people of Haiti who have been devastated.
  - for Haitian government officials who will be coordinating relief.
  - for Haitian Christians as they recover and minister.
  - for the injured and displaced.
2. Give - to aid recovery efforts of Southern Baptists. Every penny will be used for the disaster response to Haiti.
  - following Hurricane disasters in Haiti, rice has been purchased by Baptist aid groups and distributed through churches. Many churches have been started as a result of this simple but important method of caring.
  - you can give through Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief designated for Haiti relief. The address is:

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief  
P.O. Box 530  
Jackson, MS. 39205

### 3. Get Organized to go - as needs and opportunities are identified.

- Up to date passport.
- Inoculations up to date.
- Self sustained teams living in primitive conditions will be needed.

### 4. For Additional Information

- Contact the Disaster Relief Ministry of the MS Baptist Convention Board at (601) 292-3334, or email [haitidisasterrelief@mbcb.org](mailto:haitidisasterrelief@mbcb.org).
- please check back often at [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org) for the latest updates.

### 5. Share Contact Information

- Many of our Mississippi Baptist Churches already have partnerships and connections with Baptist Churches in Haiti. If your church has a pre-existing connection to a church or ministry (orphanage, hospital, etc.) in Haiti, please share that information with the Disaster Relief Ministry of the MS Baptist Convention Board. (601) 292-3334 or email [haitidisasterrelief@mbcb.org](mailto:haitidisasterrelief@mbcb.org).



# Conditions grim as relief efforts continue

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)—As conditions in Haiti grow more grim, military and relief forces are desperately searching for ways to stabilize the situation and get badly needed help to masses of people who have been without food and water for more than three days.

The International Red Cross estimates at least 45,000 were killed in the cataclysmic 7.0 earthquake that struck Jan. 12. Government workers are burying thousands of bodies in mass graves. Bodies are piling up outside hospitals and the morgue in Port-au-Prince, according to news reports. Civilians are burying their dead by roadsides or carrying them to hospitals, which themselves were demolished in the quake.

One government worker told an Associated Press reporter that his crew had found four people alive in one house but that rescue and recovery efforts were not being coordinated. Government offices were destroyed by the earthquake and military teams from other countries are working to get communications, transport and security services in place in the country.

A Southern Baptist assessment team and one from the Florida Baptist Convention have entered to connect with Haitian Baptist leaders and develop plans for

disaster relief efforts. The assessment teams will evaluate ministry needs like rescue operations, medical services and shelter as well as logistical concerns like transportation and security. They will collaborate in reporting to the national Southern Baptist Disaster Relief network with recommendations on long-term strategies to help Haitians rebuild their lives.

The destruction of government services and basic infrastructure has hampered relief efforts and raised concerns that desperate people would turn to violence. Television news reports show men and boys armed with machetes looting stores. "They are scavenging everything," a distraught resident told one reporter. "What can you do?"

Employees of the Food For The Poor relief agency were chased by several dozen people as the two came to work, according to an Associated Press report. When the pair escaped into the building, the crowd banged on the door, shouting that they wanted food. The crowd dispersed when project manager Liony Batista told them food had not arrived yet.

"You never know when people are going over the edge," Batista told the reporter. "People looked desperate, people looked hungry, people looked lost."



BROKEN BUILDINGS, BROKEN LIVES — Relief workers in Port-au-Prince, Haiti are faced with the challenges of ministry in desperate circumstances. Physical as well as spiritual needs must be met. (BP photo)

The U.N. World Food Program was preparing to distribute 6,000 tons of food aid recovered from a damaged warehouse and a massive shipment of food rations was being prepared, the AP reported.

The U.S. military has several hundred troops on the ground in Haiti and the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson has arrived off Port-au-Prince with reinforcements, news services reported. Helicopters are ferrying relief

supplies to the airport. Commanders said the goal was to get 8,000 troops engaged in providing security and delivering relief supplies.

Relief efforts have been hampered by damage at the seaport and roads blocked by debris and milling crowds, news reports said. For eight hours Thursday, the Port-au-Prince airport turned away civilian planes carrying relief supplies because space and fuel were in short supply.

## Waiting for a word from local Haitian churches

MIAMI (BP)—Jules Fritzer, pastor of Premier Haitian Church in Miami, has been waiting on news of his wife, "Madame Fritzer" and several of their children.

In Haiti for the Christmas holiday to visit relatives, she would have been staying in a guesthouse operated by the Florida Baptist Convention when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Tuesday, Jan. 12. The home in the Delmas area of Port-au-Prince is only about 13 miles from the epicenter of the quake, according to Scott Nelson, director of Haitian ministries for the Miami Baptist Association.

"It's not easy on him at all," Nelson said of Fritzer. "Just not knowing is the hardest part."

After hearing news of the mass destruction and loss of life, Fritzer has been doing what others like him do. They wait and hope. They pray.

Haitian Memorial (Evangelical) Church in Miami is scheduled to hold a prayer service from 7-9 p.m. tonight, Jan. 15," Nelson said, "with pastor David Eugene leading."

"All of our pastors have family in Haiti," Nelson said of the 84 Haitian churches affiliated with the Miami Baptist Association, representing about a third of the association's churches. Another 890 Baptist churches in Haiti were started with assistance from the Florida Baptist Convention.

"The churches are all working together on disaster relief and everything," Nelson said.

Referencing Florida Baptists' involvement with disaster relief during the historic hurricane seasons of the 1990s, Nelson said he takes some comfort in the fact that authorities in Miami-Dade

County and the Southern Command have already indicated they will rely on established networks like Florida Baptist disaster relief to assist in Haiti.

"It's a lot bigger than the last time," Nelson said, however. "This is going to be years."

And even while he helps, Nelson cringes from the images coming back from a country where he served for 14 years.

Missionaries to Haiti from 1977-91, Nelson and his wife Don are not immune to the pain of

knowing tens of thousands were injured or killed in the quake.

"I spent the whole night crying and in prayer the first night," Nelson said, after the quake hit. He soon learned that his best friend, president of a communication's company, and other friends were accounted for.

A Bible school where he taught has collapsed, however, and two of the workers were killed. Nelson said he has yet to know the identity of those killed.

"It's sad," Nelson said. "But people will need to be patient."

Knowing firsthand what it's like to live and work in a country with little to no infrastructure, Nelson said volunteers won't be able to go in right away and that people might be "more of a prob-

lem than of a help."

Officials at the Florida Baptist Convention agree.

Craig Culbreth, director of Florida Baptists' partnership mission department, who has traveled to Haiti for the past 11 years, will lead an assessment team of convention staff members to Port-au-Prince this weekend to learn the condition of Florida Baptists' guesthouse and employees who serve as missions leaders and guesthouse staff.

They also will begin preliminary plans in coordinating the delivery of disaster relief aid to the hurting nation, checking logistics and the availability of transportation of food and medical supplies into the damaged neighborhoods.

## Looking back

### 40 years ago

White House spokesman Joe Lockhart admits that Southern Baptists deserve an apology from him. Lockhart likened Southern Baptist evangelism efforts to Muslims and Jews to "perpetuating religious hatred."

### 20 years ago

Dellanna W. O'Brien is installed as the sixth executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union. In her first address to the WMU executive board, O'Brien says, "The mission for the 90's is 'Go.' Our charge is clear ... All that remains is to obey the command."

### 50 years ago

Baptist deacon and Sunday School teacher Ross Barnett becomes the 53rd governor of Mississippi, succeeding another Baptist deacon, James P. Coleman. Barnett is an active member of First Church, Jackson.



MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

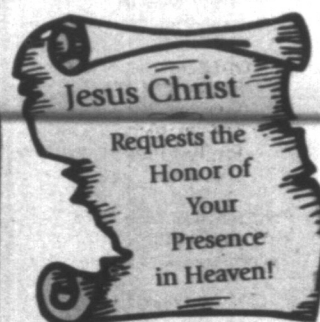
## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND  
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.





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# Are you ready for "big church?"

I've seen this scenario before, but one incident in particular stands out. I was serving as youth minister in a Florida church, and I watched, amused, as a Small Human Drama played itself out in front of me.

I watched a young mother haplessly attempt to wrangle her four-year-old son during the morning worship service. He managed pretty well during the announcements, the song service, and the "choir special." Then, when the pastor began his sermon, the wheels came off.

Little Timmy had been reasonably content doodling on the church bulletin, but a couple of minutes into the sermon he felt that the view would be better from under the pew. He slid off his seat and crawled under the pew in front of him, slithering like a snake. Mom caught him by the ankle and attempted to drag him back into place. He hollered. She clamped her hand over his mouth. He acted like he was choking and gagged. She dropped to one knee and tried to grab him around the waist. He rolled out of her grasp, still squealing "NO! NO!" Finally, with him thrashing and writhing in her arms, she was able to get him to an aisle and out the back door. The

pastor never missed a beat, but you could tell the congregation was on the verge of hysterical laughter. One of the youth I was sitting with leaned over and whispered, "I don't think Timmy was ready for big church yet."

I wonder if grown-up Timmy is ready for big church yet. Possibly you have been witness to similar tantrums among adults — not necessarily roll-in-the-floor, foot-stomping fits, but the more "civilized" type. I've witnessed reasonable adults, who, when faced

with a church financial issue, a vote on something controversial (like the color of the carpet in the pastor's study), or any number of other potential sticking points, can act a lot like little Timmy.

So, how do you know when you're ready for "big church?"

- *You can make it to church on time.* When you were younger, chances are your mama helped you get ready, had your hair brushed, and was able to get you out the door. Now, you are responsible for climbing in the car, making your way to church, and being in your place at the appropriate time. Avoid operating on "Baptist time," which is fifteen minutes behind the rest of the world. Understand that you are on "God's time," and every minute is precious and being a good steward of that time honors Him.

- *You have your stuff.* What do you need to have with you at church? Your offering, certainly. Having your Bible with you is a good idea — odds are, you will be participating in Bible study, right? And, if you use curriculum other than the Bible, have it, too.

- *You play well with others.* Don't stalk the halls with an expression that looks like you were baptized in vinegar. Speak to others. Engage in conversation. Mama told me, "We can't all be pretty, and we can't all be rich, but we can all be nice." Just common courtesy can go a long way.



- *You wait until your turn to speak.* Don't monopolize the teaching time in Sunday School, and this is true even if you're the teacher. In any meeting, listen to what others have to say. When someone else is talking, no matter what the venue, don't sit there rehearsing what you want to say when you get an opening. Seek to understand before you try to get others to see things "your way."

- *You may not get your way all the time, and that's okay.* See the point above. There is a way to "do church," and that's God's way. Seeking

His best and His alone would head off a lot of grief. Most of the world's ailments are due to folks wanting their own way at the expense of someone else. And it can be true in church, too. Think God would lead you one way on a major issue and someone else in the opposite direction? Either (a) someone isn't listening, or (b) someone is listening and being disobedient.

- *You are joyful.* Honestly, now — is there any reason not to be? I'd make a distinction between being "happy" — which is an emotional state — and "joy," which is God-given and can't be taken away, even though sometimes we choose not to experience it. Not happy with the chorus or hymn that's being sung in worship? Look around — there may be someone in the next pew that is being lifted into the very presence of God by the music and is worshipping with all their heart. Celebrate and be joyful with them and for them!

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—During the last decade or so there has been a lot of experimentation with Bible study ministries in churches. Some have changed the name from Sunday School to Bible fellowships, Life Groups or just Bible study in hopes of seeming more relevant to newcomers.

Others have tried larger groups for children as well as adults, striving to create more enthusiasm — and deal with a shortage of committed leaders. A few have just given up on an on-campus Bible study ministry, launching small, off-campus groups instead.

For most, these experiments have produced only modest or short-term results. Many are now asking a "new" question: "What if we just tried to do really excellent basic Sunday School work?"

It's a good question, but first you need to know those basics. Here are a few:

- *Five step formula.* Arthur Flake's "Formula for Sunday School Growth" still works today. A simple acronym can help you remember it: "KEEP GO." Know the possibilities. Enlarge the organization. Enlist and train the leaders. Provide space and resources. Go after the people. For more information, check out a free download of "The Five Step Formula for

## GUEST OPINION:



### Back to the Basics in Sunday School

By David Francis,  
Director of Sunday School, LifeWay  
Christian Resources

Sunday School Growth." Visit LifeWay.com and type "Five step formula" in the search box.

- *Four critical elements.* There are a lot of different elements in a vibrant Sunday School ministry. At least four are critical to success.

1. The ministry list, or class roll, includes the names of all members — active or inactive — and the class commits to minister to each person on that roll.

2. The prospect list, which includes the names and contact information for every prospective member. Remember that it is crucial to collect that information from every guest.

3. Open enrollment allows any person of any age to enroll as a member of Sunday School without regard to the requirements of church membership. Remember to invite prospects to enroll.

4. Sunday School is an open group, which means that a new person can come at any time and every lesson will be completed during the Bible study session even though it may be part of a larger unit of study.

- *Three dimensions.* Every successful Sunday School class operates simultaneously around three dimensions. The classic terms to describe these dimensions are Reach, Teach and Minister. More contemporary words with the same idea are Invite, Discover and Connect.

Effective classes balance these three dimensions and typically have at least three leaders, one of whom takes the lead on each dimension. A ministry book, "The 3D Sunday School," is available for download at LifeWay.com/sskickoff.

- *Two marks.* Release and

Reproduce are the two marks of every outstanding adult Sunday School class. Such classes release members to serve in the preschool, children and student areas of the church's Sunday School program. These adult classes keep up with their associate members serving in other areas of the program and celebrate their service.

Excellent adult classes also plan to reproduce themselves. They enlist and train apprentice leaders in each of the three dimensions with the expectation that the class will eventually become two.

- *One textbook.* The Bible is the textbook of a Sunday School class. Bible study is the most basic of all the basics of Sunday School. Curriculum materials that engage people in discovering the truths of God's Word are important, but they should never be viewed as a substitute for the Bible.

Leader guides provide commentary, teaching plans and application ideas. Learner guides help members prepare for the Bible study session and make excellent resources for outreach to prospective members. Just remember, we don't study "quarterlies" in Sunday School; we study the Bible.

Blessings as you get back to the basics.





# Practical Principles for Christian Living



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 12 • ISSUE 1

## Catastrophe and Matters of Life and Death

By Rob Chambers

Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission

Oftentimes people ask why catastrophes beyond their control occur. Many earthquake survivors in Haiti have asked themselves this very question. One moment the earth beneath them appears sure and solid, and the next moment they find themselves subject to a massive 7.0 magnitude earthquake. Being totally caught off guard there was nothing they could do to stop the earthquake or to prevent the horrific aftermath.

U.S. military says the death toll is projected to be anywhere from 150,000 to 200,000 people. Unfortunately, those who suffered and died as a result of the earthquake found themselves in an inescapable, life-taking circumstance. To learn how you can help with the Haitian disaster, call the MS Baptist Disaster Relief at 601-292-3334.

The unborn in the United States of America face a similar, inescapable circumstance.

It has been said that the womb is the most dangerous place to live in America.

Nearly one-third of all unborn chil-



Chambers

dren in America are subjected to the inescapable circumstance called abortion. These unborn children have no choice or legal rights. Subsequently, their life is at the mercy of the legal right of the mother.

The U.S. government reports that in 2005 1.21 million babies were aborted. This is 6 times more loss of life than the recent earthquake in Haiti. It would also be like wiping out the entire population of the Dallas-Fort Worth area in one year.

Along these statistical lines, by mid-March this year, abortion providers and pregnant women in America will have killed 200,000 children — the same number of estimated deaths in the Haitian disaster.

Whereas you could do nothing to prevent the natural disaster in Haiti, you can do something to prevent the onslaught of the unborn in Mississippi and the United States.

So how can abortion be prevented?

Pray for those considering an abor-

tion, as well as their friends and family. The majority of abortions are by females ages 15-24. They are typically unmarried and either in high school or college.

Having bypassed abstinence, they often see only two alternatives: having an abortion or continuing their education. If they choose to have the child, they're faced with dropping out of school. But their desire to keep the child is not always the desire of the girl's parents or father of the unborn child.

Their boyfriend, parents, and friends often coerce these girls to abort the baby. Some parents tell their daughter, "If you come home pregnant you're out on your own." If the young mother is being pressured to abort or has no place to turn, then she sees no 'real' alternative other than to have an abortion.

Should the girl desire adoption, parents and some people in the church won't support her brave intentions and will fail to foster an atmosphere that promotes life. In instances like this the girl often chooses an abortion.

Please pray that parents, friends, and churches will minister with restorative grace and forgiveness to these girls when their need is the greatest.

Mississippians can also protect the unborn from abortion by supporting

legislation: The Child Protection Act and the Personhood Mississippi Amendment.

The Christian Action Commission is working to pass The Child Protection Act in the MS Legislature. If passed the intended result will be to reduce abortions in Mississippi. Passing this legislation will require the cooperation of Christians across our state. We need to bring a Christlike influence upon the MS Legislature urging them to pass this legislation. Contact the Christian Action Commission to learn how you can help.

There is also a voter initiative called Personhood Mississippi. Although it is not an initiative of the Christian Action Commission, it is an effort we support in principle. The initiative is to amend the Mississippi Constitution with language that declares unborn human life as persons with a right-to-life. If enough certified signatures are collected by Feb 13th, then Mississippians will be able to vote on it in 2011. For more information go to [www.personhoodmississippi.com](http://www.personhoodmississippi.com) or call 662-760-8695.

The author can be contacted at 601-292-3329 or at [rchambers@christianaction.com](mailto:rchambers@christianaction.com).

## Recovering women find freedom from abortion's guilt

CRESTWOOD, Ky. (BP)—It was nearly a year ago that Missy Reigel stood in front of hundreds of people at Crestwood Baptist Church and shared her deeply personal testimony.

"On Thursday, Sept. 19, 1996, I had an abortion," she told the Kentucky congregation.

Reigel shared about how she struggled to put God first in her life as a teenager and in college but got caught up in a life of drugs and alcohol, becoming a "slave to my sin."

She recalled getting pregnant during a one-night stand, wanting to keep the baby, but instead becoming convinced by the child's father and her friends that she was "too messed up to have a baby."

Reigel described the abortion as the "worst thing I have ever gone through in my life." She said the pain was excruciating, feeling "as though my very soul was being ripped out of me."

Today, Reigel, 34, uses her story to help other women who have experienced abortions confront their own demons, accept God's grace and forgiveness — and ultimately, heal.

According to GRACE Ministries, a Crestwood Baptist ministry co-founded by Reigel in 2009, 1 in 4 women age 45 or younger has experienced at least one abortion. Of those women, 70 percent claim some

Christian affiliation.

GRACE Ministries dates back to a 2007 Bible study for women who have had abortions. It since has developed into a church-wide ministry that also provides resources and support to those facing crisis pregnancies.

The GRACE post-abortion recovery group uses an eight-week series of Bible studies to help "bring healing and wholeness to those who have experienced an abortion in their past," Reigel said.

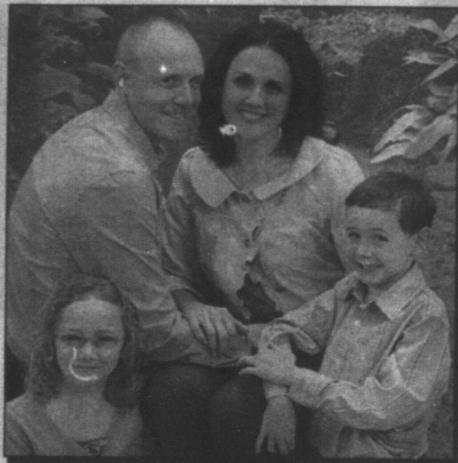
"Abortion is like the secret sin. It's like the scarlet letter 'A,'" Reigel said. "People are afraid to mention it — especially in the church."

GRACE is an acronym that stands for: Grieve the past; Receive forgiveness; Allow healing to begin; Choose to forgive; and End the Silence.

Reigel said the group uses *Surrendering the Secret*, a study from LifeWay Christian Resources written by Pat Layton. "We really wanted to make sure that we were replacing the lies with the truth," Reigel noted.

"I'm not only talking about the truth of what [abortion] can cause, what you can and will go through — the sorrow, the guilt and the regret — but also the biblical truth," she added.

The study addresses the shame that post-abortive



The Reigels

women suffer, often in isolation. The secrecy of abortion, Reigel noted, begins even before the procedure itself.

Abortion providers "don't give you details about what's going to happen, what the procedure's going to be like [or] what they're going to do to you," she explained. "There's just a lot of secrecy involved."

Julia Estes, 27, of Paducah, Ky., had two abortions as a teenager. She now helps other women cope with their post-abortion pain at Hope Unlimited Family Care Center in Paducah.

Working as a counseling men-

tor at the center since last October, Estes said that too often women who have had an abortion do not want to talk about it. "They've repressed it to such a point that they think, 'I'm OK,'" Estes said.

Hope Unlimited offers its own Bible-based recovery program called PACE (Post-Abortion Counseling Education). Estes said the one-on-one program focuses on forgiveness — accepting forgiveness from God and learning to forgive oneself — and knowing where the baby is now.

"That's a big thing for some women who have abortions, not knowing where their child is [and] not knowing if God's forgiven them or not," Estes said.

Reigel agreed, saying that even women who are believers often say they "feel like God has forgiven them of all the other sins, but they don't feel like God can forgive them of [abortion] and it has to stay separate."

"I remember thinking of myself as a murderer on a daily basis," she recalled. "I struggled with ... how I could walk around and live a normal life after doing what I did."

But what Reigel and the women who lead GRACE Ministries try to explain is

that Christ forgives all sins — even abortion.

"He does forgive us and He will heal us and He will bring us to a point where we can accept that Christ's death was enough for even our sins," Reigel said.

Both Reigel and Estes agreed that the number of women who come through their programs is small because abortion is such a sensitive issue that most do not want to discuss. "But those who do complete the studies typically are set free from their shame," Estes said.

"Once you break down the lies of the enemy and the things that have held [women] captive and bound them, then it breaks the shame off of their lives," she said.

For Reigel, the abortion more than 13 years ago has led to a ministry to help other women heal and avoid similar mistakes. She is now married to husband Chad and has two children, Cassidy, 9, and Braeden, 6.

She admitted that while she was pregnant with Cassidy, she feared that "God might not let me have my child," because of her previous choice. "It's just a testimony to God's grace that He would allow me to have a family."

Reigel also is part of a steering committee that is putting a non-profit group in place to open a crisis pregnancy center in Oldham County, Ky.



# BIBLIOPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004  
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MHHZ IVXNPHGKHP SC  
EWH GVKH VR TVO,  
GVVMSCT RVN EWH  
DHNLI VR VXN GVNO  
UHPXP LWNSE XCEV  
HEHNCBG GSRH.

UXOH EYHCEI-VCH

Clue: U = I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Six: Sixty-Five

## LAST MAN STANDING

It was only days after Christmas that I saw a manger scene being taken down and dismantled. In fact, I had seen it when it was in its fully lighted glory, but now everything had been taken down and stacked on a truck. The shed, the manger, the animal figures - cows and sheep, all of the nativity figures, and Wise Men were gone. Mary and Joseph were on the truck. The only thing that remained was one of the shepherds. Now granted, since it was a wooden figure painted to appear that it was a shepherd nothing had really changed, but this one figure standing alone where there had been a complete manger scene. He seemed to have a bewildered look on his face standing there all alone. He appeared to be wondering, "what is all of this?" Where did everybody go? Possibly, he was thinking why he was left behind.

Of course, it would not be long until he too would be taken down and placed in the stack of figures on the truck. But maybe all of us at one time or another has felt like the last man standing when all of the lights, songs, fun, and furor that go with Christmas have disappeared. Where did it go? Where did everybody go? What was that all about? What does it mean to us for the other 364 days? Well, I started to, but I did not take time to get out and go up and talk to the last man standing. Had I stopped to talk to him I would have pointed out several things that might be helpful to a lingering shepherd figure.

For one thing, I would point out that actually no experiences in life stay at a fever pitch level all of the time. He might have replied

to me, "Yes, but we are talking about the Son of God, the birth of the Messiah, the coming of Jesus Himself." To which I would have replied, "I understand but to help you understand we human beings are but dust. We are somewhat frail, shortsighted, and limited in our ability to live unfaltering at the highest level of life and experience." It is not just at Christmas, it is that way every day of life.

Think about a young couple that is getting married and so desperately in love that they can hardly breathe without being near each other, but it does not always stay that way for every minute of every day for 50 years of marriage. Think about the young couple who is expecting their first, precious little child. The day arrives for the baby to come and oh, what a celebration it is. There is no way that life can be any more precious or the joy be any greater than the new life coming to their home. It is an appropriate moment for the hallelujah chorus. Hang around for a little while, and you will discover that the great joys and blessings of birth and life with the passage of time and the testing of nerves and patience may slightly lose some of the glamour of the moment. It is that way in every sector of life as we experience things that seem to be absolutely the zenith of good moments and tremendous emotions only to find out in time that things change, the

## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

excitement dies down, and testing and trials may come.

A second thing that I would say to the last shepherd on the lot would be to remind him that as important as you were and as important as you think you might be, this great event is not about you, me, or any other creature. It is about the Lord of glory coming to reveal Himself and to touch our lives. Whether a figure standing out in a lot pretending to be a shepherd or many of us serving the Lord in our various capacities, it is wise, prudent, and, in fact, it is essential that we remind ourselves that it is not about us, but it is all about Him. If we fail to do that, we can become preachers whose manner and message becomes laced with arrogance. We can become singers or teachers who think that our giftedness or brilliance is superior to all those around us. We can become leaders in our sphere of influence who actually believe that our influence is so superior that we can do what we want to do and not pay any attention to doing right.

Possibly, there have been those times in your life when you have felt as though people did not recognize how important you are and what a significant person you are to the kingdom of God, and your

work and efforts for the Lord are certainly beyond everyone else. It may come as a shocking and even disturbing revelation that your life and mine, our gifts, influence, work, and efforts only have meaning and ultimate eternal purpose in our relationship to Him. If we would contemplate some of these things, possibly our pride would diminish significantly and His glory would be elevated magnificently.

One last thing that I would remind the last man standing in the nativity scene, and that is while you may soon feel that you are being set aside, placed on the truck, and stored for a while just remember that God is not through with you. Fill your place. Be patient, let God do with you as He wants to do, and sure enough, He will bring you to a place of joy, grandeur, and heavenly splendor in days to come. I would remind the dear brother standing in the field that he may have a hard time understanding this and it may be that he will not comprehend it, but just wait and see God restore the joy in your life. Many a saint serving the Lord fails to recognize that. They want to push the time and they wish that they could force God to do out of His timing what they want done. Just wait and see the glory of God. It will come again. Do not miss it and you will be blessed.

The author can be contacted at [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).

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# Missionaries heartbroken over earthquake tragedy

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries with long-term connections to Haiti, where the death toll from a Jan. 12 earthquake is still beyond counting, are anxiously waiting to hear from friends and former co-workers in the country. Currently, the International Mission Board does not have long-term personnel stationed in the country.

Mark Rutledge, who served with his wife Peggy in Haiti for 26 years, has been unable to contact anyone he knows in the country. The earthquake destroyed much of Haiti's communications infrastructure, according to news reports, and telephone service is spotty at best.

Inadequate building codes may have multiplied the death toll, Rutledge observed.

"To me it's pretty overwhelming," said Rutledge, who was in the United States when the quake occurred. "The codes were sufficient in the 1800s, but they're not now. The houses are very close together with multiple stories. There is a lot of potential for widespread devastation. There could easily be hundreds and hundreds of thousands dead or homeless."

Dawn Goodwin, who worked in Haiti for nearly 17 years before transferring to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, has been able to learn about conditions in Haiti through the Facebook social networking site. Although cell phones and land lines are not working, people with Internet access through satellite dishes have been able to communicate online, Goodwin said.



IN THE RUBBLE — Missionaries in Haiti are faced with rebuilding lives as well as dealing with the physical aftermath of disaster. (BP photo)

Through Facebook, Goodwin learned about friends Bruce and Cindy McMartin, who serve with another missionary organization, working into the night Jan. 12 to try to locate students at their Bible school who were missing after the earthquake.

"We're all just still in shock I think

... just too incredible to believe and to think about all the damage is overwhelming," McMartin wrote on Facebook. "The noise around [the neighborhood] this morning is of people digging out and then the wails as they find their dead loved ones."

Goodwin finds it hard to express

the emotions she feels about the destruction in Haiti and her desire to help survivors. The Port-au-Prince neighborhood in which she used to live was just a few blocks from the United Nations building that was destroyed by the quake.

"The devastation is so overwhelming — there are no words for me to express what I see when I see the pictures," Goodwin said. "I don't know what I can do as one person, but I do feel like I should be there ministering and helping. I know that the missionaries [from other groups] who are there, many of them are out in the streets now trying to find people to help."

"Haiti is a place that had so many problems already; if the world will come in and help, Haiti can be rebuilt," Goodwin added. "My heart is really heavy for the people who are suffering and can't get anybody to come rescue them because there are probably thousands who are trapped, waiting for rescue."

Haitian Christians will be giving themselves wholeheartedly in service to neighbors in need and would be grateful for prayer support, Rutledge added.

"We just ask Southern Baptists to pray for the many people impacted and for the [local] Christians to minister to communities at large," Rutledge said. "Haitians are very caring people."

## COLLEGE NEWS

1. Mississippi College is joining the worldwide response to this week's earthquake in Haiti that devastated much of the Caribbean nation's capital of Port-au-Prince. "MC is partnering with the International Mission Board to provide food, water, clothing, medical care, reconstruction and counseling for survivors," says Eric Pratt, MC's vice president for Christian development on the Clinton campus. Students and others are asked to donate money at MC chapel services Jan. 26 at First Church Clinton. Donations can also be made at 212 Nelson Hall and in the MC business office in the building's lobby. Checks should be made to Mississippi College with the notation Haiti.

2. VOCES8, an internationally celebrated a cappella group, will bring its mix of jazz, classical, spiritual, and pop music sounds to Mississippi College for a Feb. 19 concert to celebrate the 150th birthday of

Provine Chapel. The eight member team of British singers is part of a year-long tribute to MC's oldest building. The concert is Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m., and cost is \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. For more information, call (601) 925-3440.

3. Five students with Mississippi ties received doctorates from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Dec. 19. Pictured from left to right is: Michael Ray Bird of Jackson, pastor of Pocahontas Church, Jackson, who received the doctor of ministry degree; Ronald Bird of Brandon, senior pastor of First Church of Fannin, Brandon, who received the doctor of ministry degree; NOBTS President Chuck Kelley; Walter Alan Loving, Jr. of Clinton, college, recreation and singles minister at First Church of Clinton, who received the doctor of educational ministry degree; and David Eldridge of Clinton, pastor of Calvary

Church in Tupelo, who received the doctor of philosophy degree. Jonathan Eric Sharp of Carthage, not pictured, received the doctor of philosophy degree; and Jonathan Eric Sharp of Carthage, received the doctor of philosophy degree. Other graduates include Joshua Hollis Braddy, Picayune, student pastor at Broadmoor Church, Madison, received the master of divinity degree; Capt. Barry Chapman Busby, McComb, and a chaplain stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., received the master of divinity degree; Richard Carroll Cummings, Hattiesburg, and pastor of First Church, Taylorsville, received the master of divinity degree; Timothy Joseph Peabody, Clinton, and college minister at Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, received the master of divinity degree; Zachary Forrest Polk, Prentiss, and youth pastor at New Palestine Church, Picayune, received the master of divinity in Christian education



3. NOBTS doctoral graduates

degree; John Thoms Tedder, Grenada, received the bachelor of arts in Christian ministry degree; Richard "Cody" Warren, Brookhaven, and pastor of Spring Hill Church, Wesson, received the bachelor of arts in Christian ministry degree; Larnzy Lee Carpenter, Jr., Starkville, and pastor of First Church Longview,

Starkville, received the certificate in biblical teaching from Leavell College of New Orleans Seminary; and Jeffery G. Kelly, Brookhaven, and associate minister of Spring Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Starkville, received the certificate in biblical teaching at Leavell College, New Orleans Seminary.



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. New Home Church, Smith Co.



3. Bowman and Clift



4. Goss Church, Columbia



5. Park Haven Church, Laurel



1. First Church, Jackson, is hosting Life Has a Voice, a time for worship, prayer, and call-to-action for students Jan. 21, 6-8 p.m. The rally is an opportunity for youth to unite in agreement to see abortion and its side effects ended in our state and country. The event is the result of the Pro Life America Network (PLAN) working with the Mississippi Baptist's Christian Action Commission, pro-life ministries, organizations and churches across the state. Jan. 22 has been set aside as a silent prayer day. For information, call (601) 942-0340 or email life-hasavoice@gmail.com.

2. New Home Church, Smith Co., presented plaques in recognition of church membership of 50 or more years. Shown, from left, are Mollie Stringer, 62 years; Haskel Stringer, 68 years; Velma Windham, 74 years; Ellion Keys, 61 years; and Max Ray Stringer, 53 years.

3. Star Church, Star, licensed Tylee Clift to the gospel ministry Nov. 29. Shown are pastor Vic Bowman and Clift.

4. The children's choir of Goss Church, Columbia, presented the musical Shepherds, Sheep and a Savior Dec. 6. Shown are the participants.

5. The teens of Park Haven Church, Laurel, entered a float in the Laurel Christmas parade. Shown are the participants.

6. New Hope Church, Sumrall, licensed Robert Arinder to the gospel ministry Jan. 3. Shown are Sam Herrin and Arinder.

7. The preschool choir of County Line Church, Neshoba Association, were the "friendly beasts" at the manger to celebrate Jesus' birth. Shown are the participants.

8. Utica Church, Utica, recently ordained Bill Hopper and Ed Doris as deacons. Shown are pastor Rocky Henriques, Darlene Hopper, Hopper, Doris, and Artie Doris.

9. Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, ordained four men as deacons Jan. 10. Shown are Rick Morgan, Mickey Aldy, senior pastor Forrest Sheffield, William Hurst, and George Stone.



6. Arinder licensing



7. County Line Church, Neshoba Association



8. Deacon ordination, Utica Church, Utica



9. Deacon ordination, Harrisburg Church



# Baptist pastor in Port-au-Prince is among the dead

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The devastating earthquake that shook Haiti Jan. 12 has claimed the life of a leading Haitian Baptist pastor in Port-au-Prince, according to reports received from the vice president of the Baptist Convention of Haiti, located in the northern Haiti city of Cap-Haitien.

Bienne Lamerique, 56-year-old pastor of Shiloh Church in Port-au-Prince, died of injuries sustained when his house collapsed. Several Haitian Baptist pastors buried him without a coffin — because none was available — Jan. 14, according to e-mails received by Mark Rutledge, International Mission Board (IMB) missionary on stateside assignment in Richmond, Va. He and his wife, Peggy, work among the Haitian people and served within Haiti for 26 years.

He was "one of our best pastors," Pastor Gedeon Eugene, vice president of the Baptist Convention of Haiti, wrote in an

e-mail to Rutledge, who is from Murfreesboro, Tenn.

"Haiti lost a godly man," Peggy, from Glendale, Calif., said in a Jan. 15 interview from the IMB's International Learning Center in Rockville, Va. "Pastor Bienne did everything with his whole heart.... He had a heart for people and for reaching people. He planted more churches than any other pastor I know in the convention. We loved him dearly."

When the Rutledges became career missionaries in Haiti in 1987, they were part of Lamerique's first church-start in a small house in a Port-au-Prince slum.

"To me personally ... he was a real encouragement," added Mark, who traveled to Port-au-Prince Jan. 17 to translate for a Southern Baptist team. "He was one who raised up and grew leaders and started new churches. He also was one to take churches that had stagnat-

ed and begin to work with them to renew them and get them on course again. He had a tremendous impact on multiplication of churches like no other pastor I've experienced since we've been in Haiti."

"Lamerique's congregation met in a building that once was a vehicle-repair garage for the United Nations," Peggy said. It is located about a mile from the U.N. building that collapsed in the quake.

IMB missionary Dawn Goodwin, who works with Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic, visited Lamerique's church Jan. 16 with Dominican Baptist leaders who traveled to Port-au-Prince to assess needs of quake survivors. The sanctuary sustained significant damages but was still standing. "Some church members were living in the churchyard," Goodwin — who earlier served 17 years in Haiti — said in a Jan. 17 phone interview.

"We prayed with and encouraged them and their associate pastor," said Goodwin, who is from Jefferson City, Tenn. The team also left supplies, including tarps that church members planned to use to shade them-

selves from the sun during worship services.

"First Church of Port-au-Prince, located downtown near Haiti's collapsed presidential palace, also sustained damage but was still standing," Goodwin said. She and the Dominican delegation — which included Carlos Llambes, an IMB missionary in the Dominican Republic — also visited Concord Church in Port-au-Prince, which escaped damage. Llambes is a native of Cuba from Hialeah, Fla. The pastor's wife, a nurse, is treating patients in her home and soon will be setting up a first-aid clinic at the church, Goodwin said.

In other developments, on Jan. 17 Goodwin and IMB missionaries Sam and Delores York, from Midwest City, Okla., and Abilene, Texas, respectively, began helping at a medical clinic in Jimani, Dominican Republic, on the border with Haiti. Delores, a nurse, is caring for patients who have undergone amputations at the clinic. The Yorks served nine years in Haiti before moving last year to the Dominican Republic to work with Haitian immigrants.

In addition, a team of Haitian Baptists and a missionary from

another organization traveled Jan. 15 from Cap-Haitien to the capital city of Port-au-Prince to deliver supplies to the disaster zone and to minister to Haitians.

"A lot of [Haitian Baptists] are now homeless," Eugene wrote. "They spend [the] night in the streets. They are starving. The pastors want us to come very quickly."

Former IMB missionaries to Haiti and their colleagues are grieving the death of Pastor Lamerique — and they fear there will be more grief to come as reports of more casualties trickle in.

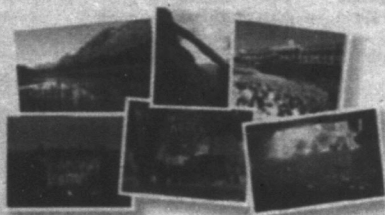
"There has just been so much devastation in Haiti," Peggy said. "It's going to take God to bring people through. Just pray that God will open the doors to reach people and to be able to help people, because this is beyond what any one organization can do."

While Haitians have been physically devastated by the quake, "they have been equally devastated spiritually and emotionally," she said. "Pray that God will bring the right people in to minister to Haitians in more than just material ways."

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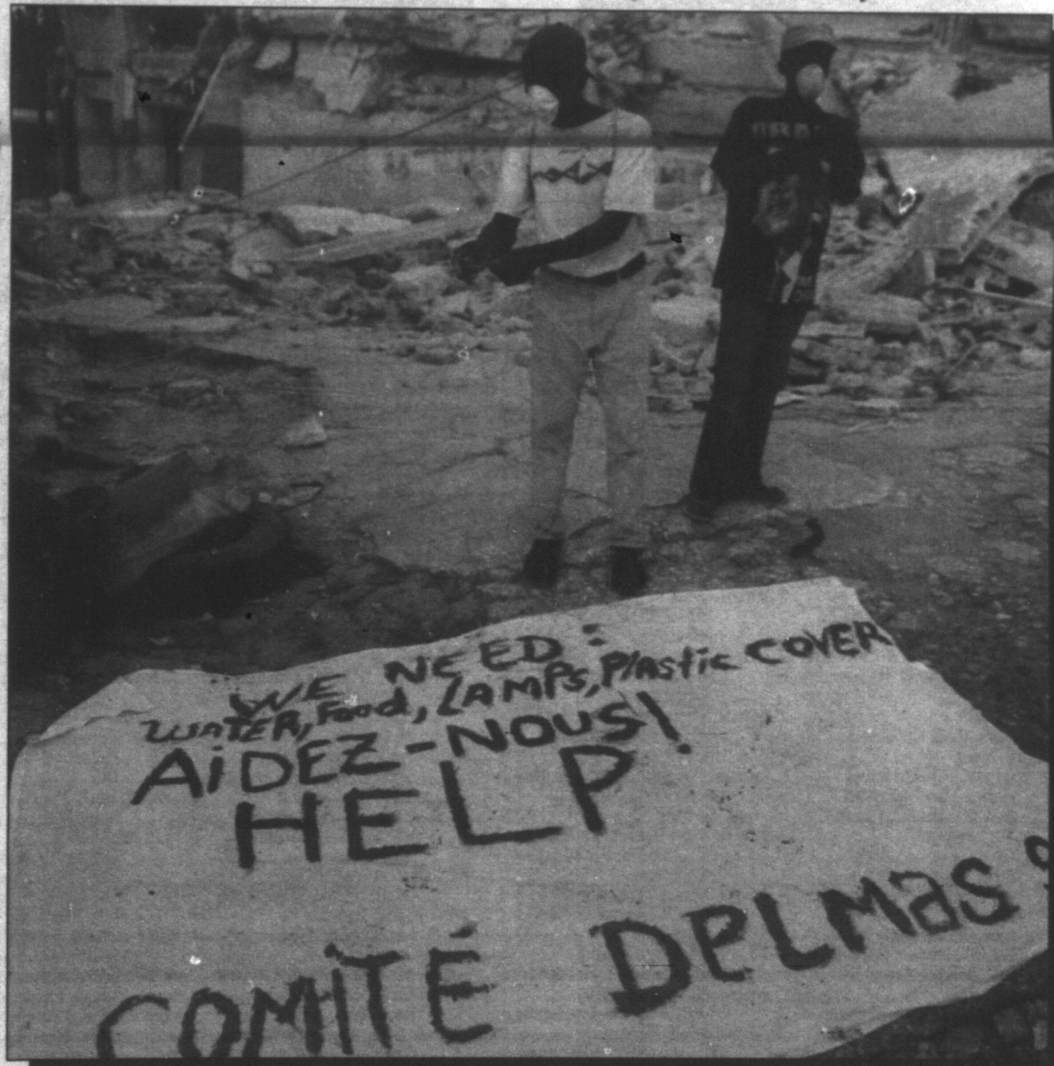
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- Thursday, January 28: Kosciusko 11:30 am; Vicksburg 5:30 pm
- Monday, February 1: Gulfport 5:30 pm
- Tuesday, February 2: Hattiesburg 5:30 pm
- Tuesday, February 9: Meridian 11:30 am; Laurel 5:30 pm
- Wednesday, February 10: Magee 11:30 am
- Thursday, February 11: Columbia 11:30 am; McComb 5:30 pm
- Friday, February 12: Brookhaven 11:30 am

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PLEASE HELP US - Two young Haitian men display a banner pleading for help in their decimated neighborhood. Behind them is what's left of a mini-market that collapsed during the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti. (BP photo)



# Southern Baptist orphanage worker in Haiti found safe

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)—A missionary who cares for orphans in her home in Haiti escaped the rubble after the catastrophic 7.0 magnitude earthquake Jan. 12.

Sherrie Fausey, a member of First Church in Jacksonville, Fla., who works with the Jacksonville-based Christian Light Foundation, is safe, according to an e-mail forwarded by eyewitnesses who had seen her after the earthquake.

"Sherrie's house suffered severe damage and Peterson was killed in the rubble," the e-mail from the Christian Light Foundation reported, "but miraculously everyone [else] got out including Sherrie and Julie."

Peterson was a 6-year-old orphan who is a member of a family of three orphaned brothers Fausey cares for, said Jim Hambrick, field coordinator for Jacksonville-based Christian Light Foundation.

Julie who is referenced in the e-mail is Julie Wirries, assists Fausey in her ministry.

"Praise God," the foundation e-mail stated. Though Fausey's house was seriously damaged, the school

building where she teaches approximately 200 children "held well and everyone is staying there." The workers and children have been sleeping outside, the e-mail said, due to safety concerns. The e-mail also indicated sporadic electric service.

"It is a disaster here," the e-mail stated. "Many killed and injured."

It urged: "Have everyone pray for Haiti."

A day after the earthquake, Hambrick told the Florida Baptist Witness he was "very, very concerned" about Fausey and "desperate for any news."

Fausey's son, Jeffrey Fausey, told News4jax.com that ministering in Haiti is what Sherri "loves to do."

"She went down there to help another missionary and felt the call to help the people of Haiti," Jeffrey Fausey said in the hours after the earthquake. "As time goes by, you get more and more worried. You hear from others but not from her."

Hambrick, in an interview with the Florida Baptist Witness the morning of Jan. 15, said he received the e-mail con-

firmed late Thursday amidst the "chaos" of also assembling a team of medical volunteers to dispatch to Haiti.

"I was elated, to say the least," Hambrick said. "I have the real peace that only God can give you, knowing she's OK."

Hambrick said Fausey and 20-plus orphans are staying at the school, which is about two miles from the Port-au-Prince airport in one of the poorest, busiest and most congested parts of the city. There, with the assistance of men sent by local pastors to help secure the school, Fausey will attempt to set up a base camp from which assistance can be offered to the stricken.

The extra security is necessary, Hambrick said, because the perimeter wall built around the school crumbled in the quake, leaving the missionaries and orphans vulnerable to escalating violence as the situation worsens in Haiti.

There are no plans for Fausey to evacuate, however, Hambrick said.

"She would never leave them now," Hambrick said. "She loves them and they need her more than ever now."

Mac Brunson, pastor of First Church in Jacksonville, said he was concerned when he learned Fausey was not accounted for in the initial days after the earthquake and called on members of the staff and the church to pray for her safety.

On receiving an e-mail that she was safe and ministering to others, Brunson said, "We just rejoiced."

Brunson said he is working with church officials in behalf of relief efforts by Florida Baptist disaster relief, which is coordinated through the Florida Baptist Convention. He has urged people to donate funds for food and water and for churchgoers to prepare to join relief teams from the church or the Florida convention as the needs are clear.

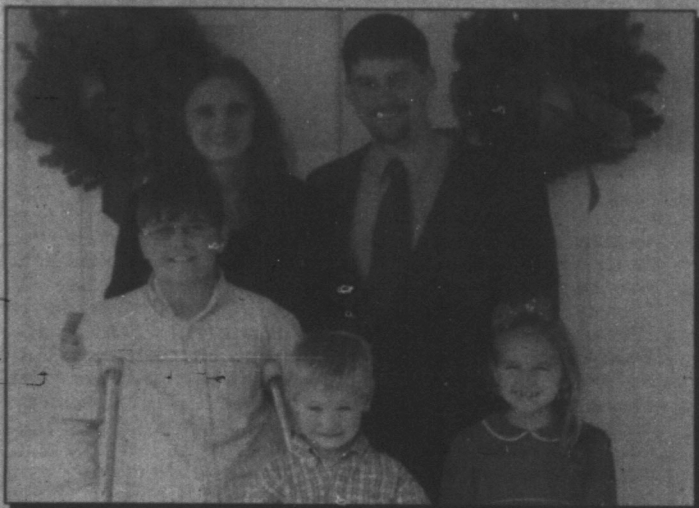
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## JUST FOR THE RECORD

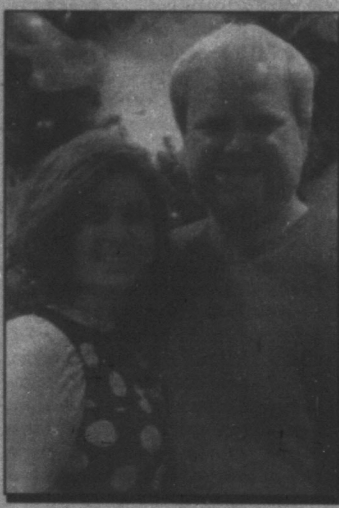
1. **First Church, Morton**, will host the Southern Gospel quartet Hosanna in concert Jan. 24, 6 p.m.
2. **Morrison Heights Church, Clinton**, the Christian Action Commission and the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, are offering *Restoration Grace*, a conference to encourage and equip the church to actively respond in a Christ-like manner to a world impacted by homosexuality. Sessions will be offered Feb. 19 and 20. For registration and information, call (601) 925-6427 or visit [www.morrisonheights.org/restorationgrace](http://www.morrisonheights.org/restorationgrace).
3. **Hardy Church, Grenada**, has given scholarships to Logan Strachan and Bradley Hill. The William R. Moss Memorial Scholarship Fund has given scholarships to 45 deserving individuals pursuing an education toward Christian service since 1977.
4. **Sunrise Church, Petal**, is hosting Souper Bowl Sunday Feb. 7, featuring soup lunch and all the trimmings after the morning worship service, followed by a singspiration at 1 p.m.
5. **Zion Hill Church, Wesson**, is hosting Jeff and Sherri Easter in concert Feb. 7, 3 p.m. A love offering will be received.
6. **First Church, Vicksburg**, is hosting a sportsman's banquet Feb. 11, with activities, including outdoor vendors and taxidermy displays, beginning at 5:30 p.m. and dinner at 6. Special guest, Phil Robertson, aka The Duck Commander, will give a duck call demonstration and share his testimony. Free admission.

## STAFF CHANGES

1. **Bethel Church, Bogue Chitto**, has called Damon Williamson as pastor. Shown, front, are Dakota, Cannon, and Sydneigh Williamson; back, April Williamson and Williamson.
2. **Dry Creek Church, Simpson County**, has called Lee Faler as youth minister. Shown are Faler and his friend, Jordan Rankin.



1. The Williamsons



2. Faler and Rankin

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## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

### Wrestling with Stuff

Ecclesiastes 2:4-8; 5:10-16

By Barbara Brown

"Whether we know it or not, all of us are engaged in a quest for something which will meet the needs of our heart. We are all looking for the secret to finding delight anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstances. What we are looking for, in other words, is the secret to contentment. That is the greatest blessing in life." (Roy Stedman's sermon "Life in the Fast Lane")

The author of Ecclesiastes was also searching for true peace and happiness. His search ended with this conclusion: nothing in and of itself brings real contentment. And he ought to know - he tried many things, testing each for its ability to bring delight to his life. He recorded the results in Ecclesiastes.

First he spent years devoted

to study, becoming very wise and knowledgeable. He later confessed that wisdom and knowledge only brought sorrow and grief. Pursuing them was like "chasing after the wind." (1:17) So he gave himself over to pleasure. That proved to be meaningless as well. (2:1) Wine and laughter also left him empty. (2:2-3)

He designed and built for himself gardens and parks, pools and houses. He bought slaves, singers, herds, and flocks. He amassed much silver and gold for himself, making himself the wealthiest man around town. Yet he said of all he had gathered for himself, "when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun." (2:11)



Brown

do - all he had done and accumulated on his own was truly not worth it. Great gains do not always equal great joy!

#### The hardships of wealth

So in chapter 5, this wise Teacher delineates some of the problems he found connected to the gathering of wealth and prosperity and affluence.

1. Wealth does not satisfy. "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with its income." (v. 10)

2. Wealth creates a burden. "As goods increase, so do those who consume them." (v.11) As wealth increases, suddenly is your friend!

3. Wealth robs rest. "The sleep of a laborer is sweet...but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep." (v. 12)

Oh, there were some benefits of his life choices; he kept his wisdom, he became well-known, and he found temporary enjoyment. But when the day was over, he was burned-out and empty. He discovered what many

4. Wealth can be hurtful to its owner. "I have seen a grievous evil under the sun; wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner." (v. 13) Many wealthy people live surrounded by paranoia, lack of trust, and even isolation as they seek to protect themselves, their families, and their stuff.

5. Wealth does not last. "...or wealth lost through some misfortune, so that when he has a son, there is nothing left for him." (v. 14) There is no guarantee that accumulated money or stuff will not be lost the next day.

6. You can't take it with you. Ancient Egyptians were so certain that a person could take their possessions into the next life that they buried their Pharaohs with as much of their stuff as possible. So they buried their chariots, their jewelry, and even their children and wives with them. "Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so departs." (v. 14)

7. Wealth becomes a source of frustration and anxiety. Accumulated wealth can

remove one's focus from the Creator of the stuff. A rich man can become so focused on protecting his riches that he forgets about God. "All his days he eats in darkness, with great frustration, affliction, and anger." (v. 17)

#### The Christian and wealth

So what about our stuff? What should the Christian consider when it comes to wealth? First of all, we must remember that everything we possess is a gift from God. (James 1:17) We are stewards, not owners. Secondly, we have to recognize that having wealth and affluence and riches can be a test. We are to use the stuff we gain in Kingdom work, not as a measure of our own achievement or worth. Thirdly, Christians must choose to use their possessions instead of allowing their possessions to use them. And finally, we must know that the only riches ever worth accumulating are those which are "stored up in heaven." (Matthew 6:19-20)

Brown is children's minister, Colonial Heights Church, Ridgeland.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### How to Get Along With Others

Mark 9:33-43, 47-50

By Malcolm Woody

You lose the trail of Jesus after a demon possessed boy is liberated by His power. Rumors spread that Jesus is still in Galilee, but you nor anyone else can find Him. Wondering why Jesus has all but disappeared, you decide to go back to Capernaum. When you arrive there you find Jesus speaking privately to his disciples in a house they frequent. Why the sudden withdrawal?

Some tell you the withdrawal centers around helping the disciples understand yet another prediction of His death (Mk 9:30-32). Others say Jesus is addressing a huge argument that erupted among the disciples as they walked the road back to Capernaum. It seems the disciples are concerned

about their place in the Kingdom. Who will be the leader? Who will have the choice seats on the throne next to Jesus? Who will be the greatest?

It is revealed that Jesus tells them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." (Mk 9:35b HCSB) Then Jesus takes a child in His arms and teaches that the child is to be received the same as Him. This teaching is in stark contrast to the world you know, where you have been taught to attain fame and notoriety by learning and applying a trade - gaining wealth and prominence in this pursuit of greatness. This, you have been told, gives your life meaning and significance. Jesus turns the tables on these thoughts and claims significance in being a



Woody

servant who would even stoop down to welcome someone as lowly as a child. According to Jesus, the way to get ahead is to get behind, be last, and servant of all.

The lesson continues as it is reported that one of the fiery Sons of Thunder, the one they call John, confesses, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us." (Mk. 9:38 HCSB)

Jesus retorts, "Don't stop him, because there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name who can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For whoever is not against us is for us." (Mk 9:39-40 HCSB) You think, how could everyone be so included? How can those who aren't part of the group be considered with us? Could it be that the name of Jesus is more powerful than any group?

Think for a moment about

our modern day. Could all the sectarian divisions we see be mended simply by the Name of Jesus? I believe that barriers could crumble and traditions that have been fortified by ages old attitudes could melt in that Name. After all, those who aren't against us are for us.

I lead the Jackson Street Ministry, and several denominations take part in our inner city outreach. We don't all agree on everything, but together we are one as we encounter the homelessness of Jackson with a sandwich and a conversation. We don't debate a lot of theology, but we sure do love a lot of people. In the endeavor of our ministry, I feel what Jesus is teaching. In the encounter of human brokenness, I see what matters most.

Jesus sums up the concepts of greatness and togetherness in the verse: "Salt is good, but if the salt should lose its flavor, how can you make it salty? Have salt among yourselves and be at peace with one another." (Mk 9:50 HCSB) We are in danger of losing our

saltiness by striving for individual status and not being at peace with our Christian brothers and sisters. This robs us of our witness to a world desperately needing the taste of the salt of the Good News.

Sadly, the disciples debate their greatness more than any other topic. Matter of fact, even at the last supper the dispute breaks out again in earnest. This always takes the disciple's eye and heart off the purpose. We face the same problem today. We are Christ's hands and feet, but we must constantly pray for His heart, eyes, and ears to guide us. If we don't Satan can lead us inward in the seeking of worldly greatness. As individuals or as churches, our focus will be in our own circle and not out in the wide expanse of the Kingdom of God. Love God, love each other and love those not yet in the Kingdom and I'm certain you will find greatness. His Greatness!

Woody is a member of Broadmoor Church, Madison.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.



Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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